

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03

ACDA-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 DLOS-04 EB-07 OFA-01 INT-05 /095 W

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R 271720Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5611

INFO CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0979

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR EFIS NATO IC

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST PRESS RELATES NATO FLEET VISIT TO FISHERIES ISSUE

1. COMMUNIST-DOMINATED PEOPLES ALLIANCE DAILY THJODVILJINN TODAY PORTRAYED VISIT TO ICELAND AUGUST 25-27 OF STANDING NAVAL FORCE ATLANTIC AS EFFORT TO INTIMIDATE ICELAND ON EVE OF LATTER'S EXTENSION OF FISHING LIMITS. IN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "NATO SHOWS ITS TEETH," PAPER RECALLED "INVASION BY BRITISH SHIPS...BELONGING TO NATO" IN 1958 AND 1973, AND SAID THAT TIMING OF CURRENT VISIT IS CAUSE FOR ALARM. "QUESTION IS," CONTINUED EDITORIAL, "DID FLEET COME TO WARN ICELAND TO GO SLOW IN FISHERIES LIMITS MATTER OR TO BE ON HAND IN CASE SERVICES ARE NEEDED?"

2. ONLY OTHER EDITORIAL COMMENT ON VISIT APPEARED IN INDEPENDENCE PARTY (CONSERVATIVE) MORGUNBLADID AUGUST 27 AND WARMLY WELCOMED CALL AS REMINDER OF IMPORTANT WESTERN DEFENSE COOPERATION IN WHICH
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ICELAND PLAYS KEY ROLE. NEWS COVERAGE OF VISIT WAS GENERALLY

PROMINENT AND ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES. THJODVILJINN TOOK OUT OF CONTEXT AND PLAYED UP REMARK BY FLEET COMMANDANT WHICH MADE IT APPEAR HE WAS UNCONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET NAVAL POWER IN NORTH ATLANTIC. (IN FACT, HE HAD BEEN EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN CAPABILITIES OF HIS SHIPS VIS-A-VIS SOVIETS, WHOSE GROWING STRENGTH HE EMPHASIZED.) PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S TIMINN TREATED VISIT IN GENERALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER ALTHOUGH, CONSISTENT WITH USUAL APPROACH, TOOK CARE TO DISASSOCIATE FLEET PRESENCE FROM ANY SUGGESTION OF SOVIET MENACE TO ICELAND. MORGUNBLADID PROVIDED HEAVIEST AND MOST FAVORABLE COVERAGE OF VISIT, WHILE OTHER TWO PAPERS MENTIONED IT ONLY BRIEFLY.

4. COMMENT: UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, PEOPLES ALLIANCE WOULD HAVE ATTACKED NATO FLEET VISIT TO ICELAND. PARTICULARLY VICIOUS EDITORIAL DESCRIBED ABOVE, HOWEVER, SHOWS LENGTHS TO WHICH PA IS TRYING TO EXPLOIT -- AND ENCOURAGE -- ULTRA-NATIONALISTIC SENTIMENTS IN COUNTRY OVER FISHERIES ISSUE.
IRVING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ALLIANCE, COLLECTIVE SECURITY, COMMUNISTS, MILITARY VISITS, PORTS, FISHING LIMITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975REYKJA00979
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750298-0114
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750813/aaaaaled.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JAN 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMUNIST PRESS RELATES NATO FLEET VISIT TO FISHERIES ISSUE
TAGS: MARR, EFIS, IC, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006